

Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice
Friday, May 11, 2007, 12 Noon
Hall of Justice, 925 W. Ottawa, Lansing, MI
Conference Room 1S-74BC
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Justice Elizabeth Weaver, Sue Dobrich (via phone), Nancy Diehl, Shauna Dunning, Don Duquette (via phone), Gloria Gillespie, Kathy Kovalchik-Lacko, Bill Lansat, Mark Liss, Eugene Moore, JoAnn Monaghan, Greg Pittman, Bob O'Brien (via phone), Pat Sorenson, Lisa Sullivan, Pat Wagner, David Wolock, Tracey Yokich (via phone), DHS: Colleen Duhm, Jim Hennessey, Ted Forrest, Mary Mehren, Steve Yager, SCAO: Carol Siemon, Other Guests: Elizabeth Carey, Jim Scherrer, Bob Miles, Bob Kafton-Chief of Staff for Rep. Dudley Spade

Members Absent: Sandra Amen-Bryan, Wayne Beerbower, Sydney Duncan, Elias Escobedo, Nancy Francis, Pamela Gilbert-O'Sullivan, John Gravier, Linda Hallmark, Judy Hartsfield, Radwan Khoury, Judy Labovitz, Sandy Lindsey, Christine McPherson, Ted Melinat, Jolanda Murphy, Sue Parrish, Michael Reisch, Lawrence Richardson, Alice Thompson

1. Welcome

2. Minutes of March 9, 2007 Task Force meeting

Motion by Nancy Diehl to approve minutes. Motion 2nd by Judge Moore. Full Task Force motion carried unanimously.

3. DHS Report-Mary Mehren and Jim Hennessey

Mary reported that DHS passed the Title IVe audit. DHS does have to make one policy change and system changed due to the audit. Jim reported on the status of the Executive Directives and DMO (DHS directives) restricting travel, meetings, contracts, etc due to Michigan's budget deficit and lack of approved budget for FY 2007.

4. SB 232

Presentations & Question and Answer Session

Elizabeth Carey, Executive Director, Michigan Federation for Children & Families

Jim Scherrer, Executive Director, Northwest Michigan Child & Family Services

Bob Miles, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Michigan

Jim Hennessey, DHS

Elizabeth Carey's organization is a membership association for private agencies. She presented the details of SB 232, as she knew them, and why her organization supports the bill.

SB 232 requires that the non-profit organizations providing foster care services remain non-profits. Services cannot be delivered by for-profit organizations. The bill mandates a practice standard accreditation for all private agencies, which is now voluntary. Outcome requirements for private agencies will be put into their contracts.

The bill also makes changes for juvenile justice services (JJ). Currently, service delivery for medium and low security facilities are duplicative. These services would be moved to the private agencies. JJ facilities cost the state money whether there are children placed there or not. If services are moved to private agencies, state would only pay when children are placed in the facilities.

The bill would only privatize a portion of the foster care services; only children in licensed foster care. There are now about 3,000 children in licensed foster homes; 60 % with private agencies and 40 % with DHS. The bill would move the remaining 40 % with DHS to private agencies. DHS would still monitor the all the cases that are handled by the private agencies. The bill calls for increased monitoring ratios: now at 45:1, bill increases it to 100:1. The bill increases the daily rate paid to the private agencies.

The bill would increase adoption cases with the private agencies also. Bill would reduce foster care staff by almost half and decrease adoption staff from 83 to 63 workers.

Jim Hennessey reported that there was a meeting with the private agencies, Sen. Hardiman, other legislators, and DHS. Sen. Hardiman is starting to meet with people about his bill.

Task force members are concerned that the problem is not whether private or public agencies handle these cases; services are not being delivered appropriately by either agency. The task force had questions about how this was a cost savings measure and about the quality of services delivered by private agencies. One member felt that there could be a reduction in bureaucracy by having all foster cares handled by DHS.

It is DHS' stance that this bill will not save money. Jim Hennessey will provide data to the task force to this effect once the report is finalized. Jim Hennessey also reported that DHS data shows that cases handled by private agencies have a longer stay in foster care and have higher rates of the children being abused/neglected while in care than cases handled by DHS.

Bob Kafton, Chief of Staff for Rep. Spade listened to the presentations. Rep. Spade's office did not have a position on SB 232 as of the task force meeting.

Justice Weaver indicated that she did not believe that the information presented showed that this bill will be good for children and families or save the state money.

Motion by Judge Moore that the Legislative Committee of the task force and any other task force members that are interested become involved in the discussions on this bill. Motion 2nd by Lisa Sullivan. Full Task Force motion carried unanimously.

5. Camera Purchase

To purchase a camera for every CPS worker, the task force would need to purchase 765 cameras. The cost of the camera, a case, and memory card for every CPS worker is more than the previous approved amount of \$150,000. The cost will be \$194,000.

Motion by Nancy Diehl to approve no more than \$195,000 for the purchase of cameras. Motion 2nd by Lisa Sullivan. Full Task Force motion carried unanimously.

6. Executive Committee Report

The task force continues to receive proposal submissions from the community. A letter will be drafted that will be sent when proposals are submitted advising that the task force will be seeking projects through “requests for proposals” in-line with the strategic plan.

See sub-committee reports below.

7. Committee Reports

A. Collaboration, Coordination, & Problem Solving-Colleen Duhm for Sue Dobrich & Sandy Lindsey

(1) Domestic Violence Training

DHS determined that DV training is non-essential for DHS employees. Under the Governor's Directives, DHS employees cannot attend. The training has been canceled. An appeal of this decision was submitted. Eight sessions were done before the training was canceled. The evaluations of those trainings were very good.

(2) Yellowbook Update

The update is complete. An addendum will be sent out to task force members. The addendum will be distributed to DHS staff and previous recipients of the Yellowbook.

(3) MPHI Contract

The public hearing for the death scene investigation tool was held on 4/26/07 with no comment. MPHI is moving forward with formatting the death scene tool. MPHI will be beginning to pull together a draft of the full protocol and assemble a team to review the draft and make recommendations for additions and/or deletions. Colleen is waiting to get clarification if the team is on the draft death scene document or the combined protocol document.

B. Training-Bill Lansat

(1) SCAO Update-Carol Siemon

The substance abuse training was very successful. Training on permanency issues is planned for this summer. Two of the permanency trainings have been determined to be non-essential for DHS employees. An appeal of that decision will be requested by Colleen.

Frank Vandervort of U of M submitted a request to develop a guide for parents’ attorneys as was done for L-GALs. Carol will work with Frank to have this funded through the Interagency Agreement.

Motion by Nancy Diehl to renew the interagency agreement with SCAO for FY 2008 for \$300,000. Motion 2nd by David Wolock. Full Task Force motion carried unanimously.

(2) PAAM-Colleen Duhm

The task force will be unable to fund any PAAM trainings as previously decided if the trainings are deemed non-essential for DHS employees. A request will be made to have this determination made.

B. Citizens' Review Panel

(1) Mandated Reporter Project-Nancy Diehl

The panel is looking at the issue of training and education for mandated reporters about their responsibility to report. The panel met with Joseph Kozakiewicz from MSU. MSU is publishing guides for each profession of mandated reporters. The panel plans to work with MSU jointly on this project. The panel also will be working with the Legislative Committee about recommending that a change be made to the Child Protection Law requiring annual training for mandated reporters.

(2) Permanency Project

Justice Corrigan has formed a committee to review Judge Tacoma's article on "legal orphans" in Michigan. Corrigan's committee has made recommendations for statute changes based on Judge Tacoma's article. The panel has reviewed the recommendations and is not taking a stance on the issue. The panel will no longer be looking at the issue since Corrigan's committee is reviewing it.

Judge Moore wanted the information on Justice Corrigan's committee's recommendations provided to the task force. Copies of the recommendations were passed out to the task force. This issue was tabled because Judge Moore had to leave the meeting early and was no longer present to present his concerns/issues.

D. Summit-Date Change-Colleen Duhm for Linda Hallmark

Summit has been moved to April 24 and 25, 2008 at the Grand Traverse Resort in Traverse City.

E. Legislative Committee-Lisa Sullivan

The Legislative Committee met. It was decided that a general letter from the task force would be drafted by Lisa Sullivan and sent to the legislature regarding the results of the email vote. Through the vote, the task force decided that it did not support the further privatization of foster care services and did support the increase in funds to DHS. However, the letter will remain silent on the increase in funds for DHS. Due to the state's budget problems, the committee does not feel it is appropriate to ask for more money for DHS.

F. Video Recording-Nancy Diehl

Nancy met with Steve Yager prior to the task force meeting. The video recording bill is moving in the legislature again. Nancy will keep the committee posted on its progress.

8. Financial Report – Colleen Duhm

The task force still has about \$200,000 of unencumbered funds but this should be used by the camera purchase. Colleen has contacted the federal government to see if we can get an extension of funds if the task force isn't allowed to spend the money due to the executive directives.

9. Old Business

None

10. New Business

Kathryn Fehrman is moving to California and will not longer be a member of the task force.

Pat Sorenson reported that the National Kids Count book will be released in June. Michigan's data is not good.

11. Announcement

Mary Mehren announced Colleen's wedding in July.

12. Public Comment

None

13. Future Meetings Dates

Due to the Governor's Executive Directives and DHS DBO's, the task force is unable to have any meetings. The following meetings have been **canceled**:

Friday, June 29, 2007, Boulevard Inn, St. Joe, MI

Wednesday, September 5, 2007, Traverse City, MI (Summit on 9/ 6 & 9/7 moved to April 2008 as indicated above.)

The sub-committees will continue to meet by conference call, as needed.

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 5, 2007 IN LANSING.

14. Adjourn

Minutes completed by:

C. Duhm

5/16/07